

Dear Committee Members,

We are delighted to have this opportunity to be heard today about the “HOUSE BILL NO. 4482 (HBs 4482-4487)”.

(April 27, 2023, Introduced by Reps. Brixie, Morse, Miller, Arbit, Tsernoglou, Paiz, Hill, Liberati, Farhat, Conlin, Wilson, Martus, Rheingans, McFall, Andrews, Scott, Hope, Price, Young, Haadsma, Hood, Dievendorf, Steckloff, Byrnes, Brabec, Aiyash and Whitsett and referred to the Committee on Criminal Justice.)

We are victims of sexual crimes.

Coming forward about sexual crimes is one of the hardest things for us to do. Coming forward with crimes with a time limit makes it extraordinarily more difficult. Being abused is highly traumatic and the effects are nothing short of life long. Some victims have symptoms from the abuse before they even have time to recognize what they are and why they are there.

Victims need time to realize the crime, process the crime, then find the strength to tell someone about the crime. Finally, victims have to go through the humiliating event of telling the police/authorities about the crime. Which can be a life altering legal battle for justice and an overall, painful experience.

Bringing a civil case against someone/some entities can also have lasting effects. But in the end, it may help benefit the victims financially. Ensuring they could afford the care they may need through their healing process. Trauma affects every victim differently. But we all have suffered immense pain and the abuse can make minor tasks seem like mountains to climb. Some things that seem so simple and easy to accomplish are not so simple to us. We have nightmares, panic attacks, exhaustion, fatigue, mental health crises, eating issues, and other physical symptoms due to the stress. To counter any of these issues can cost a great deal.

Getting criminal justice is one of the biggest reliefs a victim can feel after abuse. But winning a civil case could change their life dramatically for the better.

In order to accomplish this, we believe giving victims more time to bring a civil case would help immensely. After a lot of us sexual crime victims started to speak aloud and getting the opportunity to hear other victim’s stories, we realized how it is common for people to wait to tell anyone what has happened to them. This is a sad truth and happens too often. Sometimes after someone is finally brave enough to tell authorities about the crimes committed against them, it is too late for criminal or civil actions to be made. It took all of us a different amount of years to tell our abuse stories. We personally know some have waited until their fifties to finally tell someone their hellish abuse story. Sadly, some victims may never be able to come out from the dark shadows of the abuse.

We support this bill (HOUSE BILL NO. 4482 (HBs 4482-4487)) and appreciate the efforts of those who sponsor it and help put it together.

We appreciate the part about making it include not just minors, but all sexual crime victims.

Having some limits on cases which did not go through a criminal process is understandable. But for those who have gone through a criminal case, it would be extremely helpful to have no time limits to make civil claims.

We as citizens and political leaders may never find a way to prevent abuse from happening. But we believe we can, as a team, make it easier on those who have suffered so much. We at the Blind Eye Movement are grateful for our State Representative who is taking an interest in the road to change and the betterment of the system for survivors and victims of Sexual Crimes/Conduct.

Thank you for opening up your hearts and minds to us, and so many like us, today!

Sincerely,

Blind Eye Movement

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Sarah Sundelius

Chelsea Cooper

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